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Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, UR, US

SUBJECT:TRAVEL CONTROLS

REF: A) MOSCOW 1331 B) MOSCOW 1525

1. WE WILL BE RESPONDING IN KIND TO MFA REFUSALS, CLOSURES AND ALTERATIONS AS OCCASIONS ARISE. EMBASSY SHOULD BE AWARE, HOWEVER, THAT VERY HIGH PERCENTAGE OF SOVIET REQUESTS FOR CLOSED AREA EXCEPTIONS IS CONNECTED WITH TRAVEL BY SOVIET EMBASSY PERSONNEL TO ACCOMPANY VISITING DELEGATIONS, TO ACCEPT INVITATIONS TO SPEAK TO AMERICAN GROUPS (UNIVERSITIES, WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCILS, ETC.), OR FOR CONSULAR PURPOSES. IN MOST OF THESE CASES IT IS NOT IN OUR INTEREST TO DENY TRAVEL. IN JANUARY, FOR EXAMPLE, OF THE EIGHT REQUESTS TO ENTER CLOSED AREAS ONE WAS REFUSED (TO MIAMI BEACH ON INVITATION OF US CITIZEN). THE OTHER CLOSED AREA REQUESTS WERE FOR: AG ATTACHE EMPLOYEE TO ACCOMPANY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE DELEGATION, COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR TO ACCOMPANY DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE OSIPOV, PARTICIPATION IN SCIENTIFIC SIBERIA EXHIBIT, CULTURAL COUNSELOR TO ACCOMPANY SOVIET CIRCUS, INVITATION BY US BUSINESS FIRM TO OPEN CITY IN CLOSED AREA, CONSULAR BUSINESS (2).
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2. IN DEPARTMENT'S VIEW, MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM IN TRAVEL QUESTION IS EFFECTIVE DENIAL OF TRAVEL BY US PERSONNEL TO AREAS NOMINALLY OPEN (E.G. VOLOGDA, KOSTROMA); IN SUCH CASES IT IS EASIER FOR DEPARTMENT TO RETALIATE DIRECTLY. NONETHELESS, WE CONSIDER IT USEFUL TO BUILD UP A RECORD OF CLOSED-AREA REFUSALS BY SOVIETS AND WE CONCUR IN EMBASSY'S PLANS TO INCREASE NUMBER OF CLOSED AREA REQUESTS. AT THE SAME TIME, WE WOULD ENCOURAGE EMBASSY TO CONTINUE APPLYING FOR TRAVEL TO LITTLE VISITED OPEN AREAS, SINCE WE WILL BE ABLE TO EXERT MORE PRESSURE HERE IF SUCH TRAVEL IS CONSISTENTLY REFUSED BY SOVIETS.

3. DEPARTMENT RECORDS INDICATE THAT SOVIET TRAVEL FIGURES CITED 75 STATE A-7356 AND STATE A-329 ARE ACCURATE, AND EMBASSY IS AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE MFA WITH CY-75 TRAVEL STATISTICS AS REQUESTED REFTEL B. EIGHTY-FOUR TRAVEL REQUESTS WERE SUBMITTED BY SOVIET EMBASSY IN JANUARY FOR SOVIET EMBASSY PERSONNEL AND TWO FOR COMMERCIAL REPRESENTATION. OF THESE, 35 REQUESTS WERE FOR TRAVEL TO NEW YORK, 12 TO PHILADELPHIA AND 11 TO BALTIMORE.

4. DEPARTMENT WILL FOLLOW UP ON EMBASSY'S DISCUSSIONS WITH MFA PROTOCOL BY EXPRESSING CONCERN HERE REGARDING RESTRICTIVE SOVIET PRACTICES ON EMBASSY TRAVEL. KISSINGER

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